

64TH CONFERENCE ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN


WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE STUDENT SUCCESS

*Career Changers in Special Education:
Supporting New Teachers*

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Discussion Topics

- Characteristics of Career Changers
- Career Changers as Special Education Teachers
- Areas of Needed Support in Teacher Education Programs
 - Within Program
 - On the Job
- Areas of Needed Support in Schools
 - Working Conditions
 - Mentoring




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Characteristics of Career Changers

- Enter the field of education after three or more years in another field
- Contributes real-world knowledge and good work habits
- Believes their life experiences and age are advantages
- Will sometimes have families and are over the age of 23

(Chambers, 2002), (WWNFF, 2010)

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Career Changers as Special Education Teachers

- Must be highly-qualified in the content area they teach
- Must have skills and strategies to adapt instruction for students with disabilities
- Must be able to work collaboratively with general education teachers and the greater professional population.
- Must be responsible for IEP paperwork and implementation of special education services


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Areas of Support Needed in Teacher Education Programs

Teacher Education faculty should:

- Provide extensive and high quality field experiences
- Establish cross-facility collaboration
- Provide mentoring support
- Create a sense of community through the use of cohorts and support groups
- Offer intensive instruction in subject-matter pedagogy and research-based interventions

(Guilghey, 2010), (Browne, M., Ross, D., Colon, E., & McCallum, C., 2005), (WWNPF, 2010)


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Areas of Support Needed in Teacher Education Programs

Teacher Education faculty should become involved at the school district level by:

- offering scheduled observations
- specific professional development
- and support groups

(Bilingsley, 2005)


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Areas of Needed Support in Schools

To improve working conditions, administrators should:

- Provide additional support regarding special education procedures and paperwork
- Provide needed classroom materials and resources
- Ask for teacher input regarding their needs

• (Billingsley, 2005), (Casey et al., 2011)


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Areas of Needed Support in Schools

To improve working conditions, administrators should also:

- Provide support for problematic situations in lieu of being left to handle them alone
- Listen openly to teacher concerns
- Create teambuilding opportunities among teachers

(Farber, 2000)

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Areas of Needed Support in Schools

When providing mentoring opportunities, administrators should:

- Increase career changers' participation
- Appropriately match mentors and mentees
- Allow for both informal and regular meetings times

(Whitaker, 2000)

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Online Support and Mentoring

IRIS Resources

<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/iris-resource-locator/>

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Questions

How do teacher educators and school administrators:

- Distinguish the difference between the needs of traditionally-trained special education teachers from those with non-traditional backgrounds?
- Determine the level of supports needed for career changers in special education?
- Evaluate their support for career changers in special education?

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